

Remarks

The present Amendment and Response is submitted in reply to the Office Action mailed September 3, 2003. Claims 49-52, 54-77 and 90 were pending. Claims 49-51, 56-58, 60-66, 68-72, 74, 75, and 77 were rejected. Claims 52 and 67 were objected to.

Claims 59, 73, 75 and 76 were withdrawn from consideration as not being within the scope of the elected species. These claims have been canceled. Applicants submit that the new independent claims are within the scope of the elected species.

Claim 49, 50, 54-58, 60-64, and 90 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by, or alternatively, under §103(a) as obvious over, Johnson (5,645,433). Claim 49-52, 54-77 and 90 have been canceled, rendering the rejection moot. New claims 91-139 have been added.

Johnson discloses a test fixture for evaluating packaged semiconductor devices. The contact members 32 of Johnson are not attached to the electrical contacts on the semiconductor devices. Rather, the semiconductor devices are compressively engaged with the contact members 32. The elastomeric material returns the conductive elements to their original position when the downward force is removed. Additionally, there is no disclosure in Johnson for electrically coupling the contact members 32 with terminals on a flexible circuit member. In the context of coupling the present electrical connector to another circuit member, Applicants respectfully disagree that a packaged semiconductor device is equivalent to a flexible circuit member. Electrically coupling contacts with a flexible circuit member raises a number of technical problems generally not at issue with semiconductors, such as for example a lack of planarity and deformation of the flexible substrate.

Independent claims 91, 111 and 134 recite generally the subject matter of allowable claim 52. Independent claims 111 and 134 both affirmatively claim a flexible circuit member. For the reasons discussed above Applicant submits that claims 91-111 and 134-136 distinguish over the cited reference and are in condition for allowance.

Independent claims 112, 133 and 137 recite that the electrical contact members are attached to the flexible circuit member (see canceled claim 50). As discussed above, the contact members 32 of Johnson are not attached to the semiconductor, nor is there to be any

motivation to do so in the text fixture application. Moreover, the test fixture application of Johnson teaches away from attaching the contact members to the terminals on the flexible circuit member. For the reasons discussed below, Applicant submits that claims 112-133 and 137-139 are in condition for allowance.

Claim 65, 69-71, 74 and 77 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Grange et al. (5,388,998). Independent claims 112, 133 and 137 recite that the electrical contact members are elastically bonding to the housing with a compliant encapsulating material. Applicant submits that claims 112-133 and 137-139 distinguish over the cited reference and are in condition for allowance.

Claim 51 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Johnson in view of McMillan (5,829,988). Claim 51 has been canceled rendering the rejection moot.

Claim 66 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Grange in view of McMillan (5,829,988). Claim 66 has been canceled rendering the rejection moot.

Claims 68 and 72 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Johnson in view of Lightbody et al. (4,528,500). Claims 68 and 72 have been canceled rendering the rejection moot.

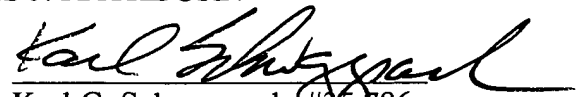
Conclusion

All pending claims are now in condition for allowance. A notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully Submitted,

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